Opening Statement of Robert Carrick,
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My name is Robert Carrick and I am the Sales Manager for natural gas vehicles at Daimler Trucks North America. I appreciate Chairman Wyden and Ranking Member Murkowski for holding an important forum on the expanding role of natural gas in the transportation sector. Daimler Trucks North America (DTNA), headquartered in Portland, Oregon, is a leader among US truck manufacturers in introducing natural gas technology in its lineup of trucks. Natural gas, particularly in the truck sector, is a viable solution to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, lowering diesel consumption, and reducing fuel costs.

Since 2008 Daimler has sold and delivered over 2,200 Class 7 and 8 vehicles, as well as thousands of school buses and step vans through Thomas Built Buses and Freightliner Custom Chassis Corp. The Freightliner Business Class M2 112 NG has been ideal for port operations, utilities, and municipalities and other short and regional-haul trucking applications. Freightliner offers natural gas technology in nearly all of its truck applications.

Daimler is committed to natural gas because of its advantages over petroleum-based fuel. For example, it produces lower fuel costs both today and for tomorrow. Today diesel averages $4.13/gallon whereas CNG averages $2.10/gallon. And annually, natural gas technology can save an estimated $15,000 in fuel and operating costs per truck. Freightliner's natural gas trucks are cleaner too: greenhouse gas emissions are reduced by at least 20 percent versus comparable diesel engines. Most importantly, the United States has an abundant supply of natural gas that will allow natural gas vehicle operation for years to come.

Natural gas powered trucks are perfect for short and regional-haul trucking. Today's natural gas trucks are ideally suited for 300 to 500 miles per day usage. For companies that operate in that environment, for example at ports and in regional hub and spoke distribution, natural gas is both economical and efficient.

Although natural gas trucks have distinct advantages, we recognize challenges continue to exist, particularly for long-haul trucking. The lack of a national network of natural gas stations is the leading obstacle facing natural gas long-haul trucking. Less than 1,200 CNG natural gas stations exist in the US, and only about 300 of them will handle truck applications. On the LNG side, there are still less than 50 retail stations in operation today. By comparison, there are over 120,000 gas stations. Technology costs remain high. The incremental cost of a typical natural gas truck is $45,000 to $60,000 (Plus FET) more expensive than a comparable truck with a conventional diesel engine. Engine technology is still a work in process, but the good news is there are new engine products on the market that have the potential to deliver "game changing" results particularly for the long-haul truck segment.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in today's discussion. Daimler Trucks appreciates the Committee's interest in the important role natural gas has in shaping America's energy and transportation policies.